for their maintenance, not the ammunition NCO. Likewise, the transportation NCO was responsible for driver training; if I had a question concerning a driver's license, I called him, not the platoon sergeant.

The support platoon may be the most difficult and challenging job in a light infantry battalion. Most officers do not realize how important the job is until they are responsible for or associated with the platoon. The challenges of operating the support platoon are ever-present. You must be able to maintain the focus of supplying the battalion's needs so its soldiers can survive on the battlefield.

Your job is vastly different from any other job in the light infantry battalion. But by keeping the lines of communication open in all directions and advising all leaders of upcoming problems and solutions, you will be better prepared to accomplish the battalion's logistical mission.

Captain Jimmy M. Bradford served as support platoon leader, HHC executive officer, and S-4 in the 4th Battalion, 27th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division, and is now attending the Infantry Officer Advanced Course. He was commissioned through the ROTC program at New Mexico Military Institute and holds a degree from the University of Texas.

Light Infantry Weapons Platoon

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARTIN N. STANTON

In the past decade or so, the U.S. Army's light infantry battalions have been operating under the J-series tables of organization and equipment (TOEs). One of the organizations deleted from the old H-series TOE to save slots was the company weapons platoon.

With the restructuring of the Army, many of the reasons that drove the designers of the 10,000-man light division and the J-series TOE to drop the weapons platoon organization (unit end strength restrictions, space restrictions) are no longer valid. The question of a weapons platoon organization at company level should therefore be reexamined.

The weapons platoon in the H-series light infantry consisted of a mortar section and an antitank section. The mortar section had three 81mm mortars, with their prime movers and fire direction center (FDC) or ammunition vehicles, and the antitank section had two TOW antiarmor systems. The platoon headquarters had a platoon leader and a platoon sergeant with a radiotelephone operator and a driver. Although the new TOE did away with the platoon and its headquarters slots in the company, it retained both the mortar and the antitank sections, although in dismounted form.

The most glaring inadequacy in the new TOE is the manning of the mortar section. At full strength, the section has only six men for two 60mm mortars, and the new M224 mortar is heavier than the previous 60mm mortar, the World War II-vintage M19. An M19 squad was authorized five men to carry and serve a single weapon. Yet today we are asking three soldiers to operate a heavier system.

I have spent six years (four as a light infantry controller at the National Training Center and two as a light infantry battalion S-3) watching mortar sections and company commanders struggle with this issue, and the six-man mortar section simply does not work.

The most common solution for light company commanders is to take only one mortar along on anything but extremely short-range offensive operations. The only time both mortars are used is in the defense.

The antitank section is rarely employed as a section in its primary function of antiarmor warfare. Instead, the six Dragon teams are usually attached down to the rifle platoons. Little doctrine is available for the employment of the Dragon section in an environment where there is no armor threat. (The fielding of the Javelin should not change the basic 13-man structure of the antitank section; each company will still have six two-man teams.)

What I propose is a return to the weapons platoon, along with the addition of eight personnel slots in each company. These slots would consist of platoon leader, platoon sergeant, mortar section sergeant, and one RTO for the platoon headquarters as well as two additional members for each mortar squad. The antitank section would stay the same. (The organization would look something like that shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3.)

Each mortar section would be organized into two squads, each with squad leader, gunner, assistant gunner, and two ammunition bearers. The platoon sergeant (MOS 11C) would be

attached to the section for field operations.

The proposed organization would have enough men to carry the M224 systems for long distances without exhausting their crews. The mortar section could also sustain a few casualties and keep going. (If you take two casualties in the present organization, you've got one tube out of action.)

During operations, the platoon sergeant would travel with the mortar section and be in tactical control of it. Once the section was emplaced, it would work a two-man FDC (computer and check computer) under the section sergeant, with the weapons platoon sergeant and section sergeant monitoring the forward observer and company command nets, respectively. Each mortar would actually be manned by three soldiers. Although the extra personnel would allow the section to carry a few more ready rounds, the rifle platoons or the AT section (in a no-armor-threat environment) would still need to be required to carry additional mortar rounds.

The change that needs to be made for the antitank section is not one of size but of function. In its primary role, the antitank section's purpose would be the same—to defeat enemy armored threats. In this role, its soldiers normally fight as cross attachments to the line platoons. But when the armor threat does not exist, the soldiers of the section are used as a security squad for the company headquarters, as a reconnaissance squad for the company commander, or as ammunition bearers for the mortars. These roles are useful, but I suggest a fourth.

In a LIC scenario, I propose that the AT section become a company machinegun section, armed with three M60 machineguns (or their equivalent replacements in the future). The allocation of one machinegun for each four-man Dragon squad would divide the weapon and its equipment among four soldiers instead of the present three. This would allow each squad to carry enough extra ammunition for sustained fire.

Under the control of the weapons platoon leader, the machineguns would be a formidable addition to the company's base-of-fire element. Three more machineguns in a LIC scenario would greatly increase the company's automatic weapon firepower, especially

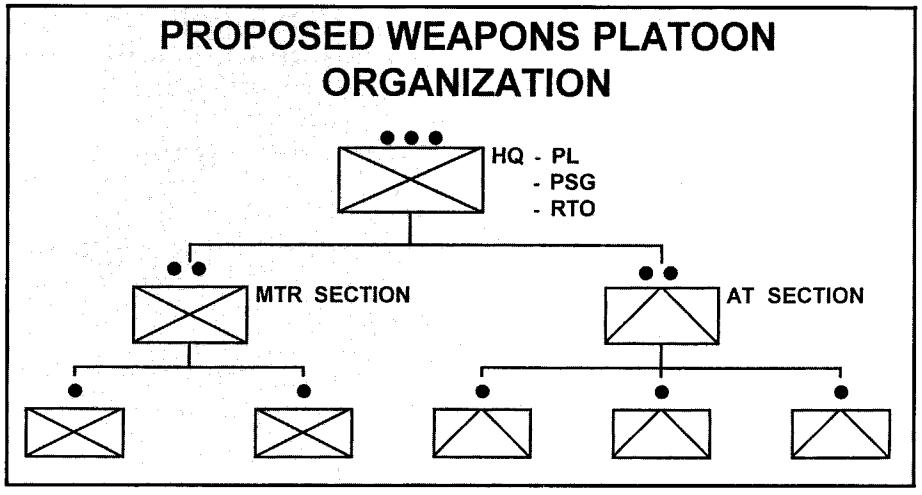

Figure 1

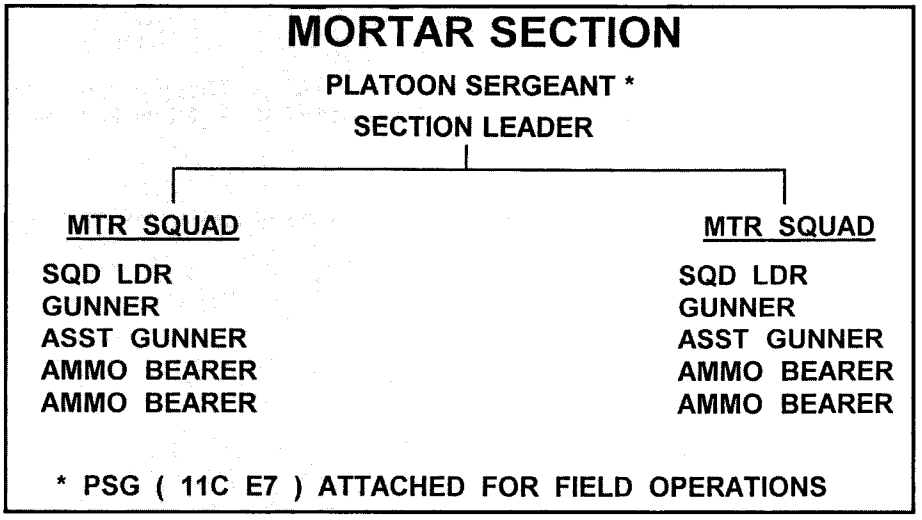

Figure 2

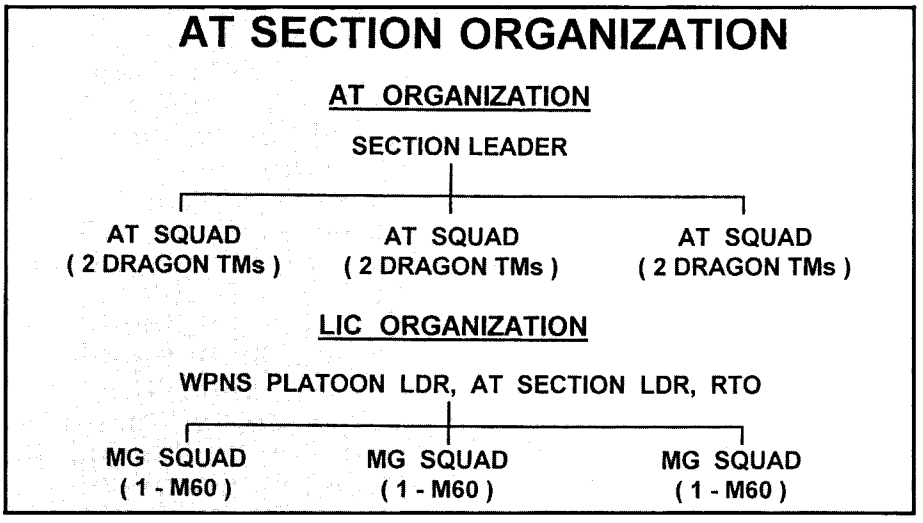

Figure 3

when concentrated under the direction of a single section leader.

When the tactical situation calls for the AT section to be used in its primary function, the three machineguns would have no trouble finding useful employment in other hands; for example, they could be allocated to the platoons or given to the company headquarters and trains.

The only real drawbacks to this proposal would be the requirement for the soldiers of the AT section to train on another system, in addition to their Dragon or Javelin and their personal weapons. But I believe these difficulties would be minor when compared to the company's gains in firepower and command and control.

Finally, with a weapons platoon, the company would have a single platoon chain-of-command responsible for planning and scheduling training; the executive officer or company commander would no longer have to plan training for each section separately.

We have been floundering around with this problem for too long. We need to give our light infantry companies a better chance to employ their organic weapons, and there's an easy fix that is also inexpensive in both personnel and equipment resources: We need to bring back the company weapons platoon.

Lieutenant Colonel Martin N. Stanton served in the 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division, in Somalia. He previously served in the 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry, at Fort Lewis, and is now assistant J-5, U.S. Central Command. He is a 1978 ROTC graduate of Florida Technological University.

Eight Steps
To Creating Quality Presentation Slides

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS MARK D. KAUDER

Any soldier who has been around a company or battalion headquarters for more than a few days knows that a briefing or training class using butcher paper with felt-tip pens just won't do any more. These are the days of computers, and we are expected to know our way around a computer. It is therefore in our best interest to know how to create quality presentation slides.

While it is true that gaudy presentation slides can detract from the information being presented, it is equally true that poorly designed slides will lose you your audience. Fortunately, there is a middle ground, and that is what I hope to present here.

A tasteful and creative presentation can take some work but generally no more work than the old butcher paper and felt-tips. The payoff is that you get your message across more effectively, your audience will retain more of the message, and they just might enjoy it enough to pay attention.

There are eight basic steps to creating quality presentation slides:

Step One: Define your subject. This is usually the easiest part of the process for most of us, because it is usually tasked. For example, the commander may say, "Give me a briefing on your company's performance in the most recent ARTEP." The key here is to limit your presentation to the subject and not get side-tracked onto other issues.

Step Two: Define your audience. Before creating slides, it is important to consider who it is you will be talking to. Is the audience an individual or a group? Is it the commanding general or a group of privates? What is the knowledge base of the audience on this subject? What will be the setting of the briefing, deskside or auditorium?

If you're giving instruction to a large group of soldiers, tailor the information to the soldier with the least knowledge on the subject, and risk boring the more advanced soldier. If the briefing is to the general and his staff, tailor it to him, regardless of the knowledge base of the staff.

The size and location of the audience will determine the medium used for your slides. If it will be a deskside briefing, consider using a small flip chart or a computer screen presentation. If you're briefing a large group, consider either overhead projection (view graphs) or 35mm film projection.

Step Three: Organize your information. Sit down and write an outline of what you are going to say. If you're a subject-matter expert and will be speaking off the top of your head, at least write out the salient points. Create bullet statements of points you want the audience to remember.

Step Four: Enter your text. Type out the information. Put it in bullet format, keeping it short—six to eight words per bullet, six to eight bullets per slide. Anything more than that is too hard to read. Remember that you are not put-